

The Amber Army

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The Amber Army

THE AMBER ARMY

And Other Poems

BY

William T. Allison



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TO MY WIFE



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The Amber Army

RED-COATED, amber, gray,
The falling leaves to-day
Drop in dead drifts within the wood,
As soldiers shotild.

In their green, glorious prime,
Through the short summer-time,
They swung, like soldiers on parade,
In sun and shade.

Then came the stern campaign
With wind and frost and rain,
Making the brilliant countryside
One ruin wide.

Of hosts so fair and fine,
Witness the thin red line,
The sole survivors of the fray
Of yesterday.

Soon the last leaf will fall
From every tree, and all
The leaves which drew such valiant breath
Lie hushed in death.

The amber army dies
Under the frosty skies;
They fall by myriads in the wood
As soldiers should.

Like men the leaves go down,
Careless of all renown,
But all are heroes, leaves and men,
In God's kind ken.

Life's grim, courageous fight
Rages by day and night,
In forest and in city street,
Charge and retreat.

But no good ever dies,
Success in failure lies;
New life shall spring from out the mould,
New from the old.

The Coming of Winter

THE first snow flies in the autumn skies,
And the wind is chill and eerie,
And night looks down with her pale, cold frown
On the fields grown gray and dreary.

For whole nights long with their piping song,
In the heavens high and calm,
The bird-hosts passed from the winter's blast
To the cypress and the palm.

From the chill snowflake and the dark, blue lake,
And the river's reedy mouth,
The wild duck swings on his whistling wings
To the rice-swamps of the south.

A chirp will sound from the frozen ground
On the morrow's morn full clear—
The whip-like note from the snow-bird's throat
Of the winter's chime and cheer.

At a Toboggan Meet

LIGHT, graceful clouds across the sky
Are scudding swift to-night,
But fleeter than yon gauze on high
Can flaunt before the moon's full eye
Our craft career their flight.

Bold privateers, they hurry o'er
A foamy stretch of sea,
With cargoes laden precious more
Than fabled store on ocean floor,
Or wealth of Araby.

Out in the frosty atmosphere
From their gay decks are flung
The hearty laugh, the ringing cheer,
The mirthful notes full sweet and clear
That fall from Beauty's tongue.

Adown the long inclines they glide,
And over fields below,
Trim vessels with the wind allied,
The playthings of our northern pride,
Toboggans o'er the snow.

Earth's Visitants

FROM God's eternal home a myriad souls
Pass out continually to those bright stars
Which are the peopled worlds of space; as rolls
That ceaseless stream to slake perchance old War's
Red thirst, or sink into the sands of Time,—
A flood of souls to face our mortal pain,
To meet the heart-aches of our earthly clime
Until they go unto their own again,—
As the wide wave of human life outgoes
To strike upon earth's shores, one every age,
In yon celestial choir, moved by our woes
A man becomes man's sorrows to assuage.
Immortal poets, golden-mouthed with song,
Brave Time, to voice the right, to break the wrong.

The November Wind

HARK how the wind drives through the night,
Accompanied by the rain;
He roars, he raves, he sweeps in might
Across the dreary plain.

The grasses bend before his face
And hear him tell their doom;
He shakes the flowers with surly grace,
They tremble in the gloom.

Then savagely he bounds away
Toward the forest lone,
The gnarled old boughs, they fret and sway
With many a creak and groan.

Death and destruction dog his heels,
And winter, sad and drear;
Ten thousand leaves each way he wheels
Go whirling, brown and sere.

Blow on, thou melancholy wind,
For summer joys are fled;
In thy loud voice relief I find
For grief long nourishèd.

Venimus ad Larem Nostrum

THIS was the choicest phrase in ancient Rome,
Because they loved religion's simpler way,
“We come to our own house, to our own home,
Where Lares and Penates hold their sway.”

What though Olympian Jove with awful frown,
With thundrous wrath our pious duties claim,—
We place upon his brow the iron crown,
And with low voice his power and pride we name.

What though Queen Juno, dignified, mature,
Compel us to our knees in wondering awe,—
We give her praise, her votive gifts are sure,
The mistress of the ordered realm of law.

What though Minerva, pale with thought divine,
Goddess of wisdom, furtive fancy chain,—
We burn our incense at her quiet shrine,
Then turn our thoughts to our own home again.

What though these greater gods be served and
feared,

While in their temples we may linger long,—
Return we at the last; as home is neared
Our hearts are glad, we lift the festal song.

And as we come in haste dear Venus hears,
'Tis she with blushing smile that opes the door,—
And we forget our cares, our pious fears,
For we have gained our own loved home once
more.

The Ancient Man of Spoil

A MELANCHOLY man at most is he,
Dull-visaged as he wanders thro' the fields,
Where smiling Ceres fills her granary
With golden store, or counts her precious yields.
Down thro' the purple vineyards Autumn reels
With listless hand lifting the skins of wine;
He takes no joy in sunshine, and the flowers
Fall limp and dead beneath his rusty heels.
Idly to watch from some brown hill's incline
The dance of whirling leaves in ghostly line,
Careworn, he loves to lie in windy bowers.

Drunk with some misty opiate he lies,
While mellow beauty holds the world in fee;
While maple groves take on the gorgeous dyes
Of Indian Summer, and each poplar tree
Rains amber tears into the nearest stream.

The smoky incense of the fruitful soil
Ascends with rich aromas for the gods,
If, haply, they will but prolong the dream
Of peace enfolding Mother Earth, and foil
Designing Autumn, ancient man of spoil,
The stupid dotard with the tempest rods.

The old man Autumn shortly wakes from sleep;
He shakes his russet locks and sallies forth
Across the wold; then, with a voice as deep
As death, he calls upon the bitter North,
Who sits forever on his throne of cold,
To loose his storm-clouds and his numbing rain.
The skies grow dim and drear; early till late
The wild geese slant their southern flight; the fold
HARBORS the silly sheep; the weather-vane
Swings in the wind and wet, till once again
Rests Autumn, nature's avatar of fate.

Fallen on Evil Days

STERN soul of him composed, though sad in sooth,
To think on those full righteous and flown days
When mighty Cromwell smoothed all forward
ways

To God's elect, showing to foes small ruth;

On him in musing lost gay Whitehall youth,
From some wild orgies fled or grosser plays,
Down to the dreary lodging came to gaze
On Milton, Vindicator of the Truth.

In room ill-tapestried with rusty green,
Devoid of books and comforts all, he sate,
In black severely clad, devout in mien.

And while they looked straight vanished all their
hate;
The clear, gray, sightless eyes, the face serene,
Claimed love and pity for a poet great.

To the Grays and the Browns

LEAGUE upon league of ice and snow,
And February's bitter chill,—
Yet "Bob White" marks with fairy show
His tiny trail up Indian Hill.

And through the bitter, blustering day,
With snowshoes on her scaly feet,
The ruffed grouse picks her happy way
To her low-hidden, snug retreat.

Brave little fluffs in grays and browns
Breasting the cheerless winter skies,
Men winter-worn in grumbling towns
Might look to you with shame-filled eyes.

*When
Woden Walks
the Night*

THE moon flees from the wolves of air
Across the dismal sky,
The wind is bleak and full of care,
Each star a dead man's eye.

For Woden walks the spacious night,
Down come from heavenly halls
Whose eastern casements bloody bright
Gleam under waving palls.

O Woden, God of Victory,
With heroes girded round,
Ten thousand German shields to thee
With warrior praise resound.

And all the Gothic sires uplift
Their song of many wars,
Hoping with thee at last to drift
Beneath the moon and stars,—

*"O Woden, onward sweep in might
O'er silent wood and plain,
While sons of Glory tread the night,
Proud spectres in thy train.*

*"We love to feel the battle's thrill,
The thrust of spear on shield,
Gladly our life's red wine we spill
On Woden's passionate field.*

*"Grim god of war, once more we raise
The victors' age-old song,
Behold our wounds, receive our praise,
And war's fierce joys prolong."*

While Teutons in their savage pride
Fling shouts to hosts above,
O Woden, hear the foeman's bride
In darkness mourn her love!

Watchmen of the Heights

ALONG the mountain peaks of time they stand,
Homeric bards, that ever strike the strings
That thrill or soothe, the music of the land
Ethereal and divine; each poet brings
To those grown dark and torpid in the clay
A holy fire, the light that lingers long
About empyrean coasts of heaven's day;
He handeth down the golden gifts of song,
For all men's sorrow-cries, and bells that toll,
All love and life are echoed in his soul.

Like meteors stream the watch-fires from the steep
Of eras numberless, and there I mark,
Limned clear against the blaze, the tireless sweep
Of harps across immortal strings, and hark!
I hear the voices of those blessed few
Surge through the upper air of space to God,
The voices of the night in kinship true
With those sweet-throated songsters from the sod
Springing triumphant, stirring farthest skies
With passion songs and glorious symphonies.

O Lonely Wind

O LONELY Wind, my sudden guest,
I hear you coming through the night;
You veer, you plunge from north to west,
The trees are cringing in affright.

You sweep across the frozen bay,
The sand-hills tremble at your breath;
The snows that slept but yesterday,
They sleep no more the sleep of death.

They dance like spectres in your train
Across the desolate divide,
Until with hollow voice again
You bid their ghostly forms subside.

And so across the frosty wold,
Old friend and true, you come to me,
You seek a covert from the cold,
You cry the old-time mystery.

And yet for all you love to roar
The same old song for me to-night
That windy Troy town heard of yore,
I cannot read your song aright.

No human ear can understand
Your mumbled magic or your prayer,
Can know the penance you have planned
To please the spirits of the air.

You bear your burden down the land,—
Yet, ancient friend, come soon again;
The sullen voice, the violent hand
Disguise the immemorial pain.

Funditores Imperiorum

O SPIRITS tremendous, titanic, austere,
Who founded the empires of earth,
Your fabrics of glory were builded on fear,
The music of swords was your mirth.

Defiant, undaunted, you travelled the path
Where Destiny beacons success,
And peoples opposing succumbed to your wrath,
And Liberty shrieked in distress.

Like lamps at a feast ye all flamed in your pride,
The pomp of great kings was your prize,
And Lust, your elusive and beautiful bride,
Flashed views of far fields in your eyes.

O Founders of Empire, how massive your tread;
How crimson the flower of your fame;
What visions of glory, invincible dead,
Arise at each magical name!

O Masters of Men, notwithstanding your power,
Death sought you and vanquished you quite;
Fate suffered you, each for his one little hour,
Then plunged you in nethermost night!

The Dream of Lucrètius

GLOOMY with thought, upon the poet's eyes
Imagination's charmèd hand was laid,
Till he forgot the blue of Tuscan skies,
The luscious life of Italy, which made
The ceaseless, sensual holiday of art:
Stern son of Rome, the power of ghostly sight
Fell on him, and the passion of his heart
Smote him with bitter grief, as in the light
Of revelation he beheld the dead
Sad hosts of time pass with their silent tread.

From the bright atmosphere of kindly hope,
From aspirations and the pride of youth,
From love as 'twere immortal, from the scope
Of eyes that followed full of fear and truth,
On swept that millioned company of earth
With jest or groan towards the fatal shore
Of that great deep, for whom when man had birth
The gods heaved out of chaos; evermore
The death mists trail along that ebon sea,
Hoarse roll the waves of death eternally.

The days that had been he again beheld,—
 Lucretius, fainting, saw the shivering souls
Of men and nations mortal, seized and felled
 By deaf and dumb Oblivion, who controls
The vast far-reaching shore, beneath the flood
 Plunging those pilgrims from the realms of time.
The mighty vision fled; the rich warm blood
 Pulsed through the poet's veins once more; of
rhyme
And dalliance he straightway fonder grew,
For love and wine were good and days were few.

The Lament for Thammuz

THE days begin to wane, and Evening lifts
Her eyes the sooner towards the vales of sleep;
The yellow leaf upon the night-breeze drifts,
And winter-voices thunder from the deep;
Thammuz grows pale in death, the Queen of Shades
Mocks sad-eyed Ishtar and her mourning maids.

Prostrate along the Babylonish halls,
On alabaster floors the women moan,
All unadmired the lilac-tinted walls
Bespangled wantonly, and sculptured stone;
Thammuz is torn from Ishtar, Queen of Love,
And she, bereft, upbraids high heaven above.

Let all the Land between the Rivers sigh,
And such as ever danced with throbbing veins
To Ishtar's music, fill the gloomy sky
With lamentation and most doleful strains;
Thammuz is dead; no more the shepherd leads
His golden flock along Im's jewelled meads.

Proud Larsam of Chaldean cities blest,
Famed for the glories of her sun-god's home,
Erech, where countless kings are laid to rest,
And Eridhu, wet with the salt sea foam:—
Princes and priests and lustrous maidens there
Sing plaintive hymns to Thammuz young and fair.

And out upon Shumir-Accadian plains,
Beneath the orient night, the shepherd boy
Blows from his oaten pipe the sweet refrains
That sadly tell of Ishtar's one-time joy;
Ana, lord of the starry realms of space,
Roams near to earth seeking the young god's face.

Yet full-zoned Ishtar will not weep for aye,
Nor will the land forever saddened be,
For Thammuz will return; some springtime day
He will appear in sweeter liberty:
Chaldean lovers will take heart again,
The Queen of Love will kiss the sons of men.

Hymeneal Chant of an Algonquin Maiden

(An exact translation of a French
prose version of the original.)

YES, I love you;
Warrior so noble and tall,
Straight as the pine,
Yours is a courage divine
From the Master of Life,
The good Manitou.

Yes, I love you;
For I can see your clear heart,
Heart now mine own.
Pure are its veins as the zone
Of first sunlight which flames
Adown on the dew.

Yes, I love you,
Brave one, with words ever kind,
Sweet as the sap
Filling with sugar earth's lap
From the maples in spring
When flowers are new.

Yes, I love you;
Beam on me, heart, for your face
Seemeth a leaf
Trembling in air; oh, my chief,
So enchanting and gay,
Be mine the years through!

A Summer's Night on the University Lawn

INFINITE calm of the summer night,
Warm stars in a measureless distance of space,
Low voice of the wind in the trees and the towers,
Silence and gloom round the stately old place.

Cold, in a splendor of silence, gray,
Half-hidden in ivy the dense Norman pile,
Wide home of the arts and the wisdom of men,
Sleeps in her classic repose for the while.

Lonely the lawn, yea and lonely, too,
My heart, as I brush through the wind-shaken grass;
Gone, gone, the fresh gold-woven garment of
spring,
Hesperides' flowers, first to come, first to pass.

Sere the long grass, all its hope gone dead,—
Hopeless my heart, for a step here shall fall
No more, and the charm of thy presence alone
Broods like a ghost over campus and hall.

A Song in Absence

I AM in thrall to loneliness,
Although I dimly hear
The city's nightly storm and stress,
An undertone of fear.

Dull-sensed and lonely here in gloom,
Two thousand miles from you,
Oh, sadly I recall the bloom
Of days alas! too few.

Too swiftly fled in places fair
Clear to the even-fall;
Oh, blithe the days, oh, sweet the air,
Where love shone over all !

We saw the golden harvest moon
Rise o'er the silent fields,
And touch with tenderness full soon
The sheaves of famous yields.

We heard the wind go organing
Down through the old pine grove,—
“ So long as time is on the wing
The human heart will love.”

Then stole a spirit from the skies,
With affluent, heavenly art
He wrote my fate within thine eyes,
And bound us heart to heart.

To a Mummy in Victoria College

O LITTLE Princess, in profound amaze
 I look upon thy silent, sombre face,
Whose cheeks in ancient Egypt's palmy days
 The proud Rameses kissed with kingly grace.
And these same tiny feet, in cerements wrapped,
 Once paced the golden floors of lordly On;
Where often thou hast petulantly tapped
 Mosaics iris-hued, and frowned upon
Some Prince of mighty Ind who loved thee well,
 Whose after-grief thou, only thou, couldst tell.

And did this little head, whose tressèd hair
 Held stony damp of lonely, desert tomb
For full three thousand years, contain a share
 Of learning more sublime than all the bloom

Of occidental lore? Ah, if you chose,
O relic of a people wondrous wise,
What unknown sciences couldst thou disclose
To strike our scholars with a dumb surprise;
But, Princess, thou art mute and hollow-eyed,
And past thee dignised the sages stride.

Canst bear the sunlight fall upon thy brow
And touch thy dusky cheek with dazzling glare?
'Tis great Osiris, Princess; often thou
Hast bowed to Egypt's chiefest god in prayer.
Aye, oft this one-time warm and throbbing breast
Recumbent lay on marble pavement rare,
As cold as pallid death, whilst thou addressed
The wingèd deity, till trumpets' blare
From holy, white-robed, thousand priests was done
In incense-vapored On, the Temple of the Sun.

When sable Night, o'er whom high Isis reigns,
Throws horrid gloom along this college hall,
Hear'st thou again the clink of golden chains
On Nubian slaves, the measured rise and fall
Of ivory oars, as Father Nilus bore
The royal barge, where beauty sat enshrined,
A perfume-breathing fairyland before,
And lines of glittering palaces behind?
But all I ask is vain, O Princess old,
Thy tongue is withered and thy heart is cold.

Thou mummy, snatched from out Egyptic land,
Pathetic emblem of antiquity,
Full well I know as here by thee I stand
 The common ground of our humanity;
The Jews were merely slaves when thou wast young,
 The Pantheon was yet unhewn, fell Rome
Lay nerveless in the womb of Time, unsung
 The song of empire in thy present home.
Princess, a paradox thou art in sooth,
Of man's old age, of man's eternal youth!

Egerton
Ryerson

HERE in the Chapel's holy, melting light
A tenderness comes o'er the square-hewn face,
A rich, transforming touch of twilight grace
That makes the brow's full majesty and might
Seem less severe, and shows the eyes more bright
And gentler in their granite cavities;
But naught can smooth from this our Hercules
The lines of stress about those lips locked tight.
For he it was who fought our fight and fared
Of old as our brave knight, our pioneer
He blazed the easy road for you and me,
He struggled for us all, he planned, he dared,
He gave us liberty; behold him here,
Strong servant of that truth which makes us free.

Front
Fleur-de-lys
in Rose

WHAT sweep of circumstance and turn of fate
Since Donnacona viewed the alien ships!
Tribe after tribe gone down in savage hate,
Or with the name of Christ upon their lips.

Gone are the glories of the old régime
Within the stately fortress of the north;
And that barbarian pomp, a daring dream
In which Versailles was rudely shadowed forth.

A song, a dance, a kiss in old Quebec,
The voyageur has gaily said farewell;
The intrepid wanderer takes little reck
Of horrid haps so easy to foretell.

Sons of fair France, the wooded solitude,
The shining river, or the fields of snow,
Made men, like Frontenac, of fearless mood.
The real romancers of the long ago!

But Frontenac is dead; the Fleur-de-Lys,
So bravely flaunting in the face of doom,
Is fallen from the place of empery;
Changed is that silent land of forest gloom.

Where stood the wilderness, great cities rise;
The Saxon holds the wide, wide North in fee;
And Canada, a nation, glorifies
The mighty Island-Mother oversea.

The Coronation of King Edward VII.

WHEN Caesar stood and mused in lonely thought
Upon the chalky cliffs of Kent, and sought
His battles o'er again, his thin lip curled
In scorn, there on the limit of his world,
At this last conquest of a savage race;
And there was sadness written on his face
Because of barren wars waged for this isle,
That lay along the sea of darkness, while
The motherland of pomp and pride
Beckoned him home to rule her empire wide.

In this small isle to-day is Edward crowned;
But this same realm is now encompassed round
With the strong love of lands beyond the foam,
Kingdoms and empires hailing her as home,
Vast continents whose shores were still unguessed
When Caesar gazed toward the boundless west;
And if our new-made King of British Men
Look but in fancy o'er the world, his ken,
In searching all earth's coasts, would seek in vain
For Roman triremes on the southern main.

The Intendant Talon's Farewell to New France

(Quebec, 1672)

THE wind is in the sails, so now farewell
To crimson woods, courreurs de bois, for, lo!
The smoke is lifting from the citadel;
The good-bye guns have spoken, and we go.

Oh, stiff and black the pines on Sillery's steep,
Brave sentinels against the autumn skies;
The shadows gather on the hills; the sleep
Of winter steals into Kanàda's eyes.

Wrapped in eternal silence frowns Tourmente,
Quebec is now a glimmering crown of light,
And Montmorency pours his hoarse lament,
As we slip down the tide into the night.

The broad St. Lawrence carries us to sea,
And we the winding stream shall nevermore
Unravel, nor the chanson ringing free
Hear round the camp-fire on the lone lake's shore.

Gone, gone the robust days in forest-land,
The flashing paddles of the war canoe,
The voyageurs, the grim Algonquin band—
Farewell, Romance, farewell, my friends, to you!

Thou region of prime fellowship, farewell;
Farewell, new world of fierce, impetuous joy,
Where the wild woodland hears the savage yell,
And louder yet the cry of “Vive le roi!”

Come, breath of vastness, blowing through the
gloom,
Sing to me of the fresh heart of the north:
O northern land of wonder and of bloom,
Thy spell upon me sends me sadly forth!

Cartier Arrives at Stadacona

At Stadacona half the sky
Was crimsoned with the sunset's dye;
 The river streaked with gold,
The broad St. Lawrence, in the pride
Of countless forests by his tide,
 Out to the ocean rolled.

They stood on Stadacona's steep
And gazed towards the boundless deep,
 Did Donnacona's braves;
In awe they looked, these savage men,
To where within their piercing ken
 White wings flew o'er the waves.

In wonderment they peered, and still
The sea's strange pinions came, until
 They flung full on the view.
Then Donnacona, he, the wise,
Said these were spirits from the skies
 Sent by the Manitou.

The night crouched in the flapping sails,
The wind roared down the forest trails,
 The river dirged amain.
And Donnacona dreamed that night
The world through all the year was white,—
 In sleep he sobbed for pain.

The Men of the North

FROM out the cold house of the north
Thor's stalwart children hurtled forth,
 Forsook their sullen seas ;
Southward the Gothic waggons rolled,
While bards foretold a realm of gold,
 And fame, and boundless ease.

Long rang the shields with sounding blows,
The furious din of war arose
 Adown the dreary land ;
But Woden held them in his care,
And safely passed the Teutons there
 By every hostile band.

At length, one day, the host was thrilled
At that glad cry the foremost shrilled,—
 “ The sea ! A southern sea ! ”
As breathless stood the northmen there,
The wind swept through their yellow hair,
 And sang of empery.

Rome's doom was written in their eyes,
Fell tumult under sunny skies,
 Death on the Golden Horn:
Now, by the rood, what southron slaves,
Or land that any south sea laves
 Can face the northern born?

The Burial of Tecumseh

THE summer woods were tremulous for grief,
Uneasy thunder shook the lips of night,
As passed his warriors on with their dead chief,
Tecumseh, slain while midmost in his might.

No word they spake as down the leafy ways
Their moccasins fell swift; no tear was there
To grace the doleful time—no sign betrays
The measure of a stoical despair.

Six forest children bare the hero's corse
Until they came unto a mournful stream,
Black-watered, and with neither sound nor force
To rudely break upon a dead man's dream.

They walled the stream with many a log and stone,
And in the virgin floor they made a grave,
They made a sepulchre, so dark and lone,
To hold the form of him, the proud and brave.

Then looked each one his last and long farewell

 On him who had renewed his nation's youth,
Whose deeds and eloquence had flung a spell
 Of hope which promised fair to end in truth.

So there the stately Shawanoes in gloom

 Hid their great chief; the stream rolled on again
To show no trace of that most kingly tomb
 While princes die and kingdoms wax and wane.

To-night the stars swing their bright lamps above

 And joy to find them mirror'd where he lies,
The evening-star of that sad race who rove
 No more light-hearted 'neath the northern skies.

The Return in Nature

Just for a day I fled the town,
The rout, the worry and the din,
The crowded mart, the gilded sin,
And speech of purse-proud rogue and clown.

For one brief day that cloudless sky,
The trees, the flowers, were my delight;
The things that pleased my childish sight
Swam once again into my eye.

I found a solace in the wind,
The unseen organ of the world,
Dispensing music that was whirl'd
O'er Iran's plains time out of mind.

The same tempestuous melodies
And deepest dirges low of tone,
That seemed supernal wrath or moan
To Goths afoot for southern seas.

Grown hard with city sleights and moil,
I learned to humbly bow once more
Upon old Nature's temple floor,
The dear brown earth, the kindly soil.

I felt the peace which Nature gives
To him who contemplates her face,
Who metes by her all time and space,
The littleness in which he lives.

For what of splendor or of fame
Can vaunt itself beneath the sun?
The race of myriads is run,
But Nature's face is e'er the same.

The secret craft of Memphian priest,
The grace of Athens, thews of Rome,
Sidonian triremes turning home,
The mellow wonder of the East,—

Who shall see them restored again?
The memory of their pride and shame
Held by the learned few, their name
Strange to the mass of modern men!

Along the great white roads of Time,
In spite of pomp and sneering lust,
Life's caravans are blown to dust.
And only Nature moves sublime.

Abendlied

(Translated from the German
of Hoffmann von Fallersleben.)

PURPLE Even comes once more
Over wood and wold,
Peace she breathes from heaven's floor,
Sleep for young and old.

Yet the noisy river pours
O'er the rocks below,
And it ferments and it roars
With unceasing flow.

Comes for it no even-time,
No peace sweet and deep,
Never twilight-bell can chime
Rest-songs till it sleep.

So art thou, my striving heart,
Struggling to be free;
God alone can peace impart,
Give true rest to thee.

A Galley Slave of Sidon

A FAIR-HAIRED slave of Sidon, what to him
 Her dream of empire and her fame?
Chained to the trireme's oar, defiant, grim,
 He cries his curses on her name.

And what to him her purple pride, her quest
 For new dominions, unknown seas,
And all the untouched wonders of the west,
 And apples of Hesperides?

Dull his poor eyes to pomp, and dead to dreams
 His withered heart; his Dacian home
All but forgot; faint and far-off the screams
 Of his young brood destroyed by Rome.

How can his sullen eyes see past the oar
 That holds him to his daily death?
Can Sidon's prayers for her great quest be more
 To this dull slave than idle breath?

To him the cheers, the tumult on the quay,
Are hollow echoes on the wind;—
The chiefs of Sidon seek the outer sea,
Fame lures them far, and fate is blind.

• • • • •

But Sidon's hopes were doomed, and fickle Fate
Denied the splendid galley's quest;
Fate heard the slave's prayer daily hissed in hate,—
His quest was death, his hope was rest!

Gray Ghout in June

GRAY night in June,
With cold, incessant rain
And wind of melancholy strain,
I read thy rune
Of mystery, thy meaning full of pain.

In these the days
Of summer's first perfume,
Of buds flung forth in spacious bloom
O'er winding ways,
In sunlit areas and nooks of gloom;

When life runs high,
Seems death a fantasy
To even such as stoics be;
With beauty's eye
Aglow with tenderness or chivalry;

Even now is come
A night gray-stoled and drear,
As though an anchorite austere,
With visage glum,
Had boldly walked into a hall of cheer.

And there aloof,
But with no speech, had eyed
The sensuous bridegroom and his bride,
Till such reproof
Had chilled with fear of death their love and pride.

Gray ghost in June,
A sombre warning thine:
Beauty will fade howe'er so fine,
And soon, ah! soon,
Life's song will cease and spilled be all her wine!

Midnight Mass for the Nineteenth Century

THE great high altar shines in gold and white,
And flutters with the taper's holy flame;
The mass of Christ is being said to-night
With gorgeous chasuble and stately rite,
And many a mention of our Saviour's name.

The same sonorous chant and mumbled prayer
Of grand liturgic pomp; the incense swung
With rhythmic lift from right to left; the air
Mistily fragrant in the chancel there
As when this church of centuries was young.

Soft are the stains of time on mouldering walls,
Worn the mosaics dim which timorous knees
Have pressed long ages since, and grim the stalls
Grotesquely carved, where the loud Ave falls
In tones that speak the awful mysteries.

O ancient fane, O venerable shrine,
O sacred litany untouched of time!
To think that this slow-swelling pomp of thine
Should speak for Him, so simple, yet divine,
Who humbly walked in yon far eastern clime!

The Cry of the Romanticist

To-MORROW I shall once again behold
 The bright clear weather after skies of gray,
 Forever through the unaccustomed day
I shall be puissant in the lists of old.

Delay not, therefore, shining day of gold,
 But spring eternal from the fields of night,
 And lift my soul into far seas of light,
And bring me near my perfect love, Isolde.

For in this night of time no more I find
 The fluted dreams, unperishing and high,
 The ringing temper of the ancient mind.

Glory is gone, while Love, a wasted thing,
 Looks from dim windows on the passers-by,
 And Love, alas! has lost the heart to sing!

Arius, the Heretic

So came he from the burning Libyan sands
To lift his voice in Alexandria,
From thence straightway to set the church in flame.
But who of all the learned city's rout
Would fear the name or face of Arius?
He moved like some pale ghost adown their streets,
A melancholy giant from the west,
Scarce heeding where he went, so lost in thought
Unorthodox, deep-going, and sublime
On Christ's relation to the Trinity.
Face ghastly pale, and features lean and worn,
And eyes adream in sunken cavities;
A sadness in his mien assorting well
With gray, dishevelled locks and squalid dress;
And yet there hung about him all the grace,
The sweetness and the sympathy of Christ.
Madman they called him for his matted hair,
His eyes of flame, his passion for his dream
Of truth, but he, the unregarded saint—
Abhorred because his thought was something new—
Struck the first blow for freedom of the mind,
And shook the world.

The
Larger Hope

Oh, sad and doubly sad to think
That death, the pitiless,
From thy soft-speaking eyes will drink
Their placid loveliness!

But death a larger hope conveys,
Works good in cruel guise;
For in those depths the soul delays,
Soul hidden in thine eyes.

Death will release the soul for aye;
While golden æons roll,
Shall we, through the exultant day,
My love, see soul to soul.

On a Windless Night

WITHOUT the windless night was bitter cold,
The ice-bound river thundered 'neath the frost,
And deftly were the window-panes embossed
By those chill fingers, skilful from of old.

But January round to June had rolled,
For that I held her in true love's embrace,
And all the rose of June was in her face,
With paler tints that apple-blooms unfold.

Sweetly reluctant, yielded she to me,
Her pure soul shining in her deep, blue eyes,
As there we closed and kissed our hearts away.

Our beings mingled on our lips, to be
In confluence forever and a day,
Even when this full-veined life descends and dies.

A Rainy May Evening

SPRING sends a ceaseless drench of rain
Aweeping down my window-pane,
 To close the showery day;
Above the trees a leaden sky
Rolls angrily a cloudy eye
 Into the alley-way.

The trolley cars with muffled roar,
Like reeking giants pass the door,
 Hoarse phantoms of the night;
A thousand puddles faintly gleam,
And shining pavements smoke and steam
 In the electric light.

Few are the citizens abroad,
And these in sullen humor plod
 Toward a dry indoors;
From roof to street the whole wet town
Can nothing do but fret and frown,
 While the spring deluge pours.

Not so the men in country places;
Content is written on their faces,
 Their joy is in the rain;
It sings of flowers and emerald fields,
Of summer fruits and golden yields,
 A song of life and gain.

**O Amber Day
Amid the
Autumn Gloom**

O AMBER day amid the autumn gloom,
With languid lids drooping on eyes of dream,
How many ancient poets in their bloom
Have sung the strange, sad wonder of thy gleam!

O splendid softness of the iron days,
Mistress between the haunts of life and death,
The poets of our day entune thy praise,
And love the sweet nepenthe of thy breath.

And so to them lost in thy purple eyes,
Come visions of the Vallombrosan groves,
Where flaming dawns, and mellow evening skies,
And falling leaves saw old unhappy loves.

The Wander-Thirst

My blood is beating to the mood to-day
That moved my sires beside the Baltic Sea,
When they looked down the land,
And saw on every hand
The tiny spears of green, Earth's mystery
When Spring-time hath her way.

The wander-thirst came on them, and their souls
Heard voices in the hazy atmosphere
That lured them with a spell,
As strong as death, to say farewell
To shores they knew, and without toil or fear
To go where chance controls.

My heart is pulsing with their strength to-day,
The venture-love that stirred their hearts of old,
The fever of unrest
That thrilled each Gothic breast,
And filled their eyes with fire, as slow unrolled
The plains of Italy.

They won the south, those children of the north,
For that they had this ichor in their blood
 That crowds my pulses now,
 And strangely tells me how
The spring brings back the old barbarian mood,
That flung my fathers forth.

The Muezzin's Call

CALLS the muezzin in sonorous tone
From the carved balcony at close of day,
And the long hours of strife, on them to pray
That are the faithful and Mohammed own.

Aside the wares of merchandise are thrown,
With eyes to Mecca turned devoutly, bows
Each Mussulman in muttering his vows,
Although the Moslem heart be cased in stone.

From no cold mosque, but from my heart a call
Of sweet compulsion bids me to adore
Thee, placid-browed, the queen of my desire.

At eve thy matchless charms shall I tell o'er,
Quicken my soul with love's effectual fire,—
So do I till I be no more at all.

In Times
of Solitariness
and Pain

IN times of solitariness and pain,
Far spent with fev'rous madness and disease,
Haply to me there comes an hour of ease,
Of brightness for the weary heart and brain.

Though but in fancy thou art once again
My own as in the vanished, peerless days,
When we went wandering down the orchard ways
Indulging hopes that were to be in vain.

Nor all, nor all in vain, O love of mine,
For if the dread unknown be paradise,
There shall our love be unity divine.

And should oblivion catch me from the steep
Of time, thy loveliness shall fill my eyes
Before I sink into eternal sleep.

Vanishings

THE dark has passed, and the chill Autumn morn
Unrolls her faded glories in the fields;
Dead are the gilded air-hosts newly-born,
And hardiest flowers droop their sodden shields,
For lovely Summer hath cut short her stay;
The fickle goddess, loaded with delight,
Grown wantonly unconstant, fled away
Under the hoar Frost's mantle yesternight.
In one brief hour the warm and flashing skies
Pale in the marble dawn; we cannot choose,
But marvel, that hearts turn to stone, and eyes
Brimful of passion all their lustre lose.
Drear is the morning; love is gone for aye,
Love done to death in one bright peerless day.

To the Shade of Symmachus

'TWAS Vir Clarissimus they titled thee
In Rome some sixteen centuries ago,
They made thee Pontifex and bowed the knee,
And named thee Champion of Victory,
And chose thee Quaestor, master of the show.

And yet for all thy pomp at many a feast,
Good friend and gentleman of ancient Rome,
Inexorable Time counts thee the least
Among the sons of Romulus; Fame ceased
Long since to hymn her stately praetor home.

Praetor, whose purple pride has passed away,
Thine eyes were blinded to the rising light;
Thy pompous feet found not the better way;
From the one vital force in that dead day
Thou stood'st aloof and chose perpetual night.

Disdainful Roman Senator, whose pride
Ignored the lowly life of truest breath,
The glory of the Cross, what ashen tide
Bears thy dead soul upon its bosom wide
Far down the listless, endless realms of Death?

The Canadian Pine

A KEEN, sweet fragrance lies along the air,
The odor of the tall Canadian pine;
How soft the sunbeams on his needles shine,
And where the snow has left the forest bare,
He spreads his russet carpet everywhere.
High in his swaying top the crooning wind
Eases his stormy soul,—time out of mind
He sought his ancient, steadfast solace there.
And so I find beneath the sturdy pine,
The spirit of the north, the blessed peace
That calms this easy-troubled soul of mine,
And gives to discontent a sure surcease.
In all the north I love the pine the best,
Emblem of strength, simplicity and rest.

The Eternal Path

TIME drives us on along the eternal way,
And as we strain toward the unknown goal,
We hail with joy or grief each new-born day,
We bless or curse the seasons as they roll.

But this our Earth is doomed as well as we;
She holds her course unwearied round the sun;
She spins along the path, unwitting she,
If ever her long journey will be done.

And he, our central force, our life, our light,
Sun of our little group of starry spheres,
He plunges on into the infinite,
Unknowing what celestial coasts he nears.

And other suns, a million suns beside,
With frightful, unimaginable force,
Are whirling through aerial deserts wide
To unknown bournes on the eternal course.

Secret the way, far-off, unknown the goal,
And yet the Father holds us in His care;
He guides His worlds, He lifts the weary soul;
He knows the way, He hears the feeblest prayer.

The Great Companion

Oh, come, my Lord, and walk with me
Through all the ways of life;
I need Thy presence, Lord, each day,
In quiet or in strife:
Oh, let me feel Thee near
On joyous days or drear.

Oh, come, dear Christ, and strengthen me
My calling to fulfil,
Make all my service glad and free,
And consecrate my will:
My weakness, Lord, I own,
I cannot walk alone.

Oh, Man of Sorrows, come to me
When anguish wrings my soul,
Fill me with Thy serenity
And make my spirit whole:
For life's Gethsemane
Is glorified by Thee.

And when at last I view the shore
 Of the eternal sea,
And hear death's mighty waters roar,
 Oh, come and pilot me:
Until through storm and night
I reach the world of light.

Gray Europe
in the
Golden East

GRAY Europe to the Golden East,
The camel-train from Muscovy
To where each lean and leathery beast
Rests while the pilgrim riders feast
Beneath the budding almond-tree.

Siberian snows, the bitter wind
Down Tartar plains, dead wastes and drear,
To where the sun doth burn and blind,
And spiced breaths of the south wind find
The full-blown flowers through all the year.

Gray Europe to fair Palestine,
The green hills for the desert's frown,
For iron spire the gorgeous shrine;
O Pilgrim, Christ's own joys are thine,
From gray to gold, from cross to crown.

The Dream of the Disciples

THEY followed their meek Lord from day to day,
And ever as they went hung on His power,
For through the works He did they saw the way
That led to the inevitable hour.

Christ, how they longed for that great stroke divine.
When He should seat Himself, Master and Lord,
O'er God's own kingdom, heir of David's line,
The hope of Israel wielding Heaven's sword!

By night their sleep was fevered, and their rest
Fitful and broken in Judean fields,
Their dream was glory, and the Master's quest
To them meant ruin to the Roman shields.

Imperial Rome already they beheld
Fawning and prostrate at Immanuel's feet,
Her purple pride undone, her might dispelled
By His supernal word from Zion's seat.

And Zion, city of their dreams, her fame
Should awe the splendid East, and as of old
Her God should dwell in her, and in God's name
The Prince of Peace bring in the age of gold.

The Living Voice

AND will He speak no more to mortal men,
The God of Revelation and of Love?
Men passionately cry, " Speak once again,
Send some convincing word from Heaven above.

" As if it were the ancient time and Thou
Didst speak to Moses in the desert flame,
Source of the non-consuming fire, even now
So call some mighty soul to serve Thy name.

" As when Thy Spirit stirred the aspen trees
To signal the advance against the foe,
So now, O Lord, by outward sign to these,
Thy present soldiers, Thine approval show.

" Lord God of Life, speak to Thy people, speak!"
Men plead with passionate and choking cry,
" Thy face, Thy living voice, Lord, do we seek,
As in the dust of doubt we gasp and die!"

The trumpet tones of truth were heard of old
And Thou dost speak to-day ; men seek a sign,
Men crave the thundrous voice from Heaven rolled
To ratify the immemorial line.

But they who seek a sign, the Master said,
Shall not thereby from darkness find release,
For though one come returning from the dead.
He could not mend their doubts nor bring them
peace.

*Hear ye God's living voice, and see His face
In Jesus Christ; yea, hear His voice to-day
In all his sons, who, by the Lord Christ's grace,
Exemplify the Life, the Truth, the Way.*

The Dream of the Old Men

Principal Caven, a leader among those who favor organic church union, pressed the argument not only for the economy of the resources of the churches, but the higher argument from the definite prayer and expressed desire of the Head of the Church that His followers might be one.

"It would be the fulfilment of my life-dream, the answer to my life-prayer, to see these three Churches one in organization as well as in spirit," said Chancellor Burwash. "And the barriers are breaking down."

*Affectionately inscribed to Chancellor Burwash and
Principal Caven.*

LIFE-DREAMS of fuller love are coming true;
Revered old age, with shining, undimmed eyes,
Enchanted with the unexpected view,
Beholds another dawn of love arise.

For lo, the barriers are giving way,
The age-long obstacles to union fall,
And the glad dawn brings in the happier day,
When Christ, and not the Creed, is all in all.

For this they toiled, this was their life-long prayer,
This was their hope amid sectarian strife;
Others abode in doubt, or in despair
Lost the fair vision of the broader life.

Others, alas, who prayed with them, passed on
Into their rest; they saw the far-off goal,
But not for them the glory of the dawn,
Three folds of Christ become one mighty whole.

But these our fathers, counselling with us yet,
And echoing the Master's prayer that we,
His followers, might be one—their eyes are wet
With tears of sudden hope, and wistfully
To us they turn for instant aid, to all
Their sons of different folds, to merge compact
In one great brotherhood, ere God shall call
Them home and their dream fail of living fact.

They long to see this great, new Church go forth
To holy war, hopeful and strong and free,
Holding the wide dominion of the north,
Her splendid cohorts flung from sea to sea.

O gentle dreamers, saintly guides, we hear
Your call; our senseless rivalries shall cease;
The day of fellowship draws very near,
And your last song shall be a song of peace.

MARCH 10th, 1905.

The Death of La Salle*

THE first, warm, prairie-scented breath of Spring
Blew from the Texan plains and lulled to rest
The little camp, men worn with wandering
In the despairing, thrice-repeated quest
Of the lost river, pathway to the west,
Wide road to Nouvelle France; in dreams once
more,—
No longer by a mocking fate oppressed,—
They found the highway home and swiftly bore
Far northward from the cruel Metagordian shore.

Soldiers and priests in the grim bivouac—
A handful dreaming in the wilderness—
In fancy reached Quebec and Tadousac
And told of great exploits, of long duresse,
Of Fort St. Louis' graves, the sore distress
Of France's venture in the southern land.
Sweetly they dreamed, but no sleep came to bless
The troubled soul of him who dared, who planned,
Sieur de la Salle, the captain of the forlorn band.

* See Parkman's "La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West," Chapter 27.

That long, long day La Salle had watched in vain
For the delayed return of false and true
With hunters' spoils, and now he racked his brain
For signs or words from which he might construe
Some grudge they bore him or some devil's brew
Of black conspiracy. Alas! too well
The hero's prescient soul the future knew,
Could conjure up his murdered men, foretell
The assassins' work that made the wilderness a hell!

With the first break of dawn the leader rose,
Determination writ upon his face:
He armed himself, called for a guide and chose
A friar to go with him to the place
Where duty drew, perchance where death's em-
brace
Would be the welcome at the journey's end.
And as they went his talk was of the grace
Of Heaven, which always surely doth attend
That man who loves to make the Most High God his
friend.

Douay, the friar, inscribed in after days
The touching words La Salle confessed that morn,
Of all he owed to God, a meed of praise
For all His gracious care since he was born:

How he had braved the hatred and the scorn,
Escaped the deep designs of countless foes,
Of governors and priests, who would have torn
Him from their path but that the good Lord chose
To save him from their snares, to ward off all their
blows.

From that far day full twenty years before
When bright-eyed Danger tempted him to thread
The lonely woods to find the golden door
To China and Japan, ever his bed
Was 'neath the silent stars, his noiseless tread
Upon the forest floor, or on blue seas
And lonely lakes and spacious rivers sped
His light canoe: a hundred tragedies
His eyes had seen and by God's grace escaped all
these.

“ Wherefore,” he said, “ my thanks be unto God
Who hath in all the dangers I have passed
Seen fit to spare my life that I may laud
And bless His name this morn: but whether cast
Among the Iroquois, or in the blast
Convulsing Huron sea, my heart has known
Death comes but once, to every man at last,
And only when God wills: if overthrown,
This day I die without a grief, without a groan.”

These solemn words at end, sadly they came
Towards the traitors' camp, where in the sky
Two eagles wheeled above the low fire's flame
Waiting to seize their prey. La Salle's quick eye
Noted this sign of death, then angrily,
Firing his gun, he called to one who stood
On guard for news of Moranget. Reply
Was made in tones that boded nothing good;
Then hastening on La Salle was lured within the
wood.

Crouch'd in the reed-like grass, their savage hate
Still unappeas'd by the bright, dolorous flow
Of comrades' blood, the hideous traitors wait
With weapons train'd upon the man they know
So well, once leader, now their helpless foe.
Their moment comes: two shots the death pro-
claim
Of the inflexible La Salle, brought low
In the full flower of his deathless fame,—
The foulest crime in all New France's deeds of
shame!